

BELLA COOLA VOWELLESS WORDS

Obstruent-clusters occur frequently in the Bc language and are to be found in various surroundings:

- a) word-initially: tpiiχ° "cover, lid", psayxt "pitch of fir tree", x°plχs "end of story", χsaλ "heavy rain";
- b) word-medially: ʔincaak "limb moss", mntxʔa "dip up water", q°asta "mountain goat wool", maaχsa "nose";
- c) word-finally: ʔalatk "miss, make mistake", wanuks "who are you?", psayxt "pitch of fir tree", ti suλs "his house";
- d) on word boundaries: ti snanik ʔayx "this gum", ʔawλtap xa xnasuks "you pl. are followed by the women", ti suλ ʔayx "this house", ʔawλtiniλ xa xnasuks "we're followed by the women".

More complex obstruent-clusters:

- a) sc(ʔ) qyaχaksta "stump of tree";
- b) ʔux°uqχtmax°aw "they called each other";
- c) sʔixk°x° "bushtail rat";
- d) ʔalacaamkcutsk°č skxis ... "he told them that he had seen ..."

A group of such clusters have lexical status and can easily be isolated from their syntactical environment: plt "thick", ʔχt "stone", skx "black".

Semantically speaking, these vowelless words are not restricted to a narrow class of words; they may represent verbs (kx "see, look at"), adjectives (sx "bad"), nouns (stq° "mud") and one exclamation (sic) (ct "hey!").

Phonological shape of vowelless words.

a) plosive-plosive: (1) t^hk "sticky", (2) t^hk° "to gather up", (3) t^hq "go to the shore", (4) t^hq° "take (sing) fur off", (5) t^hc "to chop", (6) t^hk° "bleed", (7) t^hq "to dry berries", (8) c^hp "to wipe", (9) c^ht "hey!", (10) c^hk° "heavy", (11) c^hq "bore a hole", (12) c^hq° "to tear", (13) c^hq°- "start on sth.", (14) c^hp "to stick (e.g. in the throat)", (15) l^hp "cut with scissors", (16) l^hk° "pick up little things", (17) k^hp "to share", (18) k^hc "cut with axe", (19) k^hλ "plant sth., put sth. down", (20) k^h°p "straight", (21) q^hλ "to stumble", (22) q^ht "crooked", (23) q^h°p "empty spot".

b) plosive-fricative: (24) p^hs "to bend", (25) p^hx "crabapple", (26) tλ "strong", (27) t^hx "cut with knife", (28) t^hš "adze sth.", (29) t^hs "be salty", (30) t^hx° "to sweep", (31) cλ "(sth.) bust(ing)", (32) c^hx° "dark", (33) c^hs "loud", (34) c^hλ "to cover", (35) c^hš° "white", (36) λλ "dry", (37) k^hs "pull sth.", (38) kλ "fall", (39) k^hx "to see", (40) k°s "rough", (41) k°λ "split sth.", (42) k°s "engaged", (43) k°λ "pour and mix sth.", (44) qλ "to hurt again and again (oneself)", (45) q^hs "tight", (46) q^hš "to bite", (47) q°λ "laugh", (48) q°š° "move sth."

c) fricative-plosive: (49) s^hp "to chop sth. in sth.", (50) s^hk "to scratch off", (51) s^hk° "undo sth.", (52) s^hq "to wound sb.", (53) s^hq° "jump", (54) λp "to mix", (55) λt "to dry up", (56) λc "press down", (57) λk° "big", (58) λq "wet", (59) λq "to slap", (60) λq° "it caves in", (61) x°p "untie a rope", (62) x°t "go through a hole", (63) x°c "spilled up, broken up", (64) š°p "soaked wet".

d) fricative-fricative: (65) s^hx "had", (66) s^hx° "burn sth.", (67) s^hš "brush sth.", (68) šs "fat", (69) š°s "oil sth.", (70) š°λ "go ahead with sth."

A few vowelless words alternate with full-vowel forms: q°λ "(a) laugh" - ?ilq°nλ-timut-c "I'm laughing", p^hx "crabapple" - ?ixp^hixλp "crabapple tree", c^ht "hey!"

ct "hey!" - hact id., 'cs "loud" - 'isc'is "make noise with tools", λk° "big" -
 - λ(i)k°lx "old (people)", sq° "jump" - sixsiq° "to jump, fly".

Vowelless words, consisting of more than two obstruents:

plosive-plosive-plosive: (71) c(')kt "to arrive";

plosive-plosive-fricative: (72) ckλ "little girl";

plosive-fricative-plosive: (73) plt "thick", (74) t'xt "stone", (75) q°st
 "leak as a wound";

plosive-fricative-fricative: (76) c'xλ "true", (77) kλx "be awake";

fricative-plosive-fricative: (78) skx "black";

fricative-fricative-plosive: (79) sx°λ "be short of sth.", (80) s'xp "tie
 a knot", (81) λx°t "go through a hole";

plosive-plosive-fricative-plosive: (82) qpst "to taste";

plosive-fricative-fricative-plosive: (83) p'x°λt "bunchberry".

Complex vowelless words:

a) units containing nominalizer s-: (84) s'ts "salt" (t's "be salty"),
 (85) scλ "frost" (cλ "bust"), (86) sc'x "dripping" (c'x-m "to drip"), (87) s'λk°
 "wart" (λk° "pick up little things"), (88) s'λx "spark" (s'λxusmaλ "hail",
 nu'λx'mik "burst", 7aλ'λx'maaqalicc "my teeth chatter"; Squamish s-ti'q°-m "large
 spark", Shuswap s-taq°-tí-tq°-t "spark"), (89) s'kc "sickness" (k'c "cut with
 axe", cf. Dutch "door ziekte geveld" - "felled by (a) disease"), (90) sk°λλp.
 "seed" (k°λ "to plant", -λp "plant, tree"), (91) sq'λk° "clothes" (q'λk°ta id.),
 (92) s'xs "seal fat" (x's "fat, stout").

Doubtful cases: (93) sps "cold east wind", (94) spq° "blizzard snow" (pupq°
 "loose"; Squamish V'pək° "form puffs/clouds of dust/smoke/spray", páq°an "to
 scatter"), (95) stp "freckle" (tp-ii'x° "lid, cover", tp-y-aa'x "cross one's
 legs", tp-uc-l'xs-a "put a stick through the sliced salmon"), (96) stx°c "cot-
 tonwood buds", (97) stq° "mud" (Squamish tiq° "muddy"), (98) sc'k "little sticks
 from firbark" (cf. ck-λp "ribs"), (99) sc(')q "animal fat"

(100) sk'st "charcoal" (sk'x "black"), (101) sk'p "saliva", (102) sq'c "sand",
 (103) sq'sk'lp "saskatoon brush" (? cf. q's "tight"), (104) sq'λ "fishbone",
 (105) s'xc "sprout of berry".

b) units containing the suffix -λp "tree, plant": (106) sk'λ'lp "seed" (cf. (90)), (107) sq'sk'lp "saskatoon brush" (cf. (103)), (108) q'lp "balsam fir" (q'-λp or q'λ-λp?). Maybe also: ck'lp "ribs" (cf. (98)).

other

c) units containing affixes or clitics: -λ "past, dead", -c "I, my", -c' "now", -k° "past (narrative), -k'° "iterative past". -λ, -c', -k°, and -k'° may be attached to both transitive and intransitive verbal stems, whereas -c may be attached to any nominal stem but also to intransitive verbal stems.

The imperative endings -x̃ (singular subject) and ^a-x̃° (plural subject) can be attached to any intransitive verbal stem.

The imperative endings -t̃x̃ (singular subject, singular object), -tt̃x̃ (singular subject, plural object), ^{-tan-x̃}~~-t̃x̃~~ (plural subject, singular object), and ^{-tan-x̃}~~-tt̃x̃°~~ (plural subject, plural object) can be added to any transitive verbal stem.

As a result, longer vowelless words are formed: ^{q'pst-tan-x̃}~~q'pst-t̃x̃°~~ "taste these things!", λx̃°tλc "I went through a hole", c'k'k'c' "then he arrived".

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